

To DC  
10/2/85  
OMB No. 1024-0018  
Exp. 10-31-84  
For NPS use only

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

received  
date entered

1. Name

historic The Gage Group (Ascher, Keith, and Gage Buildings)

and/or common 18, 24, and 30 South Michigan Avenue

2. Location

street & number 18-30 South Michigan Avenue not for publication

city, town Chicago vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county Cook code 031

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, Cook County Building

street & number 118 North Clark Street

city, town Chicago state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See Continuation Sheet has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Gage Group is located at 18-24-30 South Michigan Avenue In Chicago, facing Grant Park between Madison and Monroe Streets. The group is often referred to as three buildings, since there are three sections with separate entrances and (originally at least) of different heights. Moreover, the tallest section has a completely different facade. However, the entire group was built as one structure, with a common foundation and a common steel frame. Party walls separating the sections were so designed as to permit the infill panels to be opened up, allowing the floors to be combined. (Note 1) This has actually been done on some floors between 18 and 24 South.

Each section is a flat-fronted, flat-roofed Chicago style commercial building. Originally the sections at 30, 24, and 18 South were built to heights of 6, 7, and 8 stories, respectively. Four years later, the height of the 8-story section was raised to 12 stories. In 1971, the height of the 6-story section was raised to 7 stories.

The construction is steel frame, fireproof, on pile foundations. The sections have widths of 44 feet for 30 South and 62 feet for each of the others; the common depth is 160 feet.

The sections at 30 and 24 South are faced with red pressed brick and red terra cotta. From the second to the seventh (top) floor, all the windows are treated uniformly as Chicago windows, with a very large fixed center light flanked by narrow movable sash. The brick piers are carried without interruption from the base to the parapet, and are richly molded, while the parapet itself is a flat unornamented brick surface. The extreme sides of each of these sections are also flat, so that the sides and top form an unbroken frame for each section. Originally these two sections were terminated by simple classically inspired cornices, but the cornices have been removed. The spandrels are plain brick panels, except that the projections of the sills are underscored by a crown molding and dentils. The original ground floor, a simple and direct treatment in iron and glass, has been destroyed, and the present store fronts are without historical interest. In the section at 30 South the double-hung windows have been replaced by fixed lights over casements. This alteration was done sensitively and inconspicuously.

When the top floor was added at 30 South in 1971, care was taken to match the brick and the details.

The facade at 18 South is quite different, allowing for the common structural conditions. The treatment is uniform from the second story to the top story. Originally each unit of the cellular frame was filled with a screen of Luxfer prisms at the top, and with a row of fixed lights (with casements in some places) at the bottom. There were four lights in the side bays and five in the center bay. In time the fenestration was changed, and the windows now consist of double-hung sash, in the same number as the original lower lights.

More striking than the windows is the architectural treatment of the flat surface covering the skeletal frame. This facade is cream-colored terra cotta. At the sides and top of this section the terra cotta forms a flat surface enclosing the elevation. The borders of this surface are decorated with geometrical motifs.

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7. Description (Continued)

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Between the bays, the piers carry colonnettes running without interruption from the base to the parapet. At the parapet, these piers terminate in capitals of rich botanically inspired ornament. These ornamental capitals seem to burst out of the tops of the piers and to spread luxuriantly outward, reaching up over the border of the parapet and also down over the frames of the top-floor windows.

On each of the spandrels there are ornamental medallions much smaller than the two great capitals, but related in style and character. Each spandrel panel also carries a rich ornamental course near its lower edge, derived from geometrical motifs. Below the sill projections the spandrels have a uniform series of semi-circular ornamental arches, decorated with a mixture of geometrical and botanical motifs. The little spandrels between these arches are coved or corbeled out to meet the outer edge of the sill projections.

The sense of enclosure of the facade is completed by two more ornamental features at the base of the side piers, and originally by a flat rectangular cornice which has been removed.

The first floor of this section was originally framed in richly modeled panels of cast iron. The original entrance, in the left half of the right bay, featured a projecting vestibule and was surmounted by a semi-circular arch. However, all these ground-floor features have been destroyed. The present ground floor finishes are without historical interest.

Originally each section had a simple fire escape at the southern end. These have been removed, while a heavy fire escape has been added in the north bay of the section at 18 South Michigan.

There is one contributing building and no noncontributing resources in this nomination.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1898-1899 **Builder/Architect** Holabird & Roche, Louis H. Sullivan

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

In the Gage Group, Holabird & Roche and Louis Sullivan, two of the most distinguished architectural firms in the history of commercial architecture, take a common structure and treat it in two different ways. Each of these solutions represents an outstanding example of the different approaches to the design of commercial buildings with a skeleton frame which characterize the Chicago school.

Essay:

At the end of the 19th century, architects were faced with the problem of the high commercial building, for which classical or academic precedents did not offer a satisfactory solution. The willingness of Chicago architects to experiment with new technology and a new design vocabulary has led to universal recognition of the excellence of what has come to be called the Chicago school of commercial architecture.

Two streams are often distinguished in this development. In one line, structuralism and functionalism are interpreted in a relatively direct, or literal, or "empirical" manner.

The architects who embody this line are Holabird & Roche.

In the other line, the principles of structuralism and functionalism are interpreted in a romantic, poetic, or emotional manner, with abundant use of ornament. The epitome of this manner is found in the work of Louis Sullivan.

In the Gage group, we have a masterpiece of the one line standing side by side with a masterpiece of the other, in fact sharing a common structural frame. Because of this juxtaposition, there is perhaps no one building which tells the story of the Chicago school better than the Gage group does.

Holabird & Roche were the architects for the two southern sections at 24 and 30 South Michigan, and for the structure of the entire group. Of all the architects of the Chicago school, they designed the greatest number of characteristic buildings. It has been suggested that they arrived at a kind of design "formula" which allowed them to produce a large number of high-quality designs in the commercial style. In any event, while no two of their buildings are alike, many of the best ones bear a strong family resemblance.

The typical Chicago-school design of Holabird & Roche may be seen to exhibit the following characteristics:

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

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- de-emphasis on historically inspired ornament;
- uniformity of treatment from floor to floor and from bay to bay;
- cellular treatment of the fenestration, expressing the cells of the structural cage;
- facade handled as a linear grid, piers carried through, spandrels recessed, horizontal and vertical elements in a complex equilibrium;
- Chicago windows, tripartite, with a large fixed center light and smaller movable sash on each side.

All these characteristics are present in the building under consideration. In fact, this is probably the earliest case in which all are simultaneously present, at least among extant buildings. For example, the Marquette Building (Holabird & Roche, 1893; National Register, 1973) does not have true Chicago windows, for the most part; most of its windows are divided in the middle, causing them to be seen not as a central window with secondary sides, but as a row of more or less equal lights.

Thus the Holabird & Roche facades in the Gage Group are fully characteristic of this stream of the Chicago school, and perhaps the earliest such design.

Turning to 18 South Michigan, we are reminded that Louis Sullivan never worked to a formula; while there is a strong personal stamp in his work, each of his major works seems to have been invented ab ovo, starting from the unique conditions of the problem.

While the Holabird & Roche designs exhibit a very high degree of logic, clarity, and quality, there seems to be no question that Sullivan went further. He studied the problem of lighting the interiors, for the millinery workers who were to use the building, and found a solution in the then-new technology of Luxfer prisms, which brought filtered daylight up to 100 feet back from the windows, giving light without glare. Using these prisms in the upper part of his windows gave additional horizontal energy to his design. He restored the equilibrium by giving greater emphasis to the vertical piers, giving them a deeper relief and a powerful termination.

He then went forward with this richer program. His cornice is more elaborate. His frame, the flat surface of the sides and parapet, is more richly detailed, and more emphatically terminated at the cornice and at the bottom of the piers. The medallions of the spandrels, carefully placed with respect to the vertical divisions of the windows, and the other details of these spandrels weave together the entire facade into a two-dimensional texture incomparably more beguiling than the straightforward linear grid of the other sections.

The alterations have naturally wrought considerable changes in the effect of this facade. The removal of the prisms and the addition of four stories have attenuated the vertical lines. The texture has been thinned and the voids of the window groups are now more strongly marked. However, the verticality is not inconsistent with Sullivan's program to bring out the loftiness of a tall building; in fact it strengthens the resemblance to Sullivan's Bayard Building in New York, designed and built the year before. And the

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

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changes tend to tighten the relationship with the other two sections of the Gage Group. One regrets the alterations, but the two designs still tell the same story; the differences still have the same sense.

The interest and significance of these two designs, and especially of Sullivan's, have been recognized wherever the Chicago School has been discussed in any depth. Condit calls the two smaller sections "especially refined examples" of the mature work of Holabird & Roche. (Note 2)

Thomas Tallmadge says, "This Gage Building still stands in my opinion as one of the best expressions of the skeleton steel commercial skyscraper... [and] marks the high point of Louis Sullivan's material achievement." (Note 3) This may be set beside Henry-Russell Hitchcock's assertion that Sullivan was "the first truly great modern architect, not alone of America but of the whole western world." (Note 4)

Thus the facades of this architectural ensemble present a unique juxtaposition of outstanding but contrasting examples of the different approaches to the problem of the commercial building for which American and especially Chicago architects have long been recognized and admired.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Note 1 (Item 7): Brickbuilder, v. 9, Feb. 1900, pp. 36-37.

Note 2 (Item 8): Carl Condit, The Chicago school of architecture, Chicago, 1964, p. 125.

Note 3 (Item 8): Thomas Tallmadge, The story of architecture in America, New York, 1927, p. 224.

Note 4 (Item 8): Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture in the 19th and 20th centuries, Penguin, 1958, 1971 (quotation is from p. 279 of the 1971 paperback edition).

Other references

5. Burnham Library, Art Institute of Chicago, Microfilm Roll 19, frames 236-319.
6. Holabird & Roche papers, Architecture Dept., Chicago Historical Society.
7. Architectural Records, v. 8 (1899), pp. 422-425.
8. Brickbuilder, v. 8 (1899), pp. 253-254, photo.
9. Economist, v. 17 (1897), p. 224; v. 20 (1898), pp. 49, 334, 421, 538; v. 25 (1901), p. 371; v. 27 (1902), pp. 397, 433.
10. Inland Architect, v. 33 (1899), p. 20, and plate following; v. 36 (1900), 2 plates following p. 8.
11. Midwest Magazine, Chicago Sun-Times, Sunday, Sept. 12, 1971.
12. Report of proceedings before the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks, April 19, 1983.

Copies of many of the periodical references listed above can be seen in the Gage Group file at the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, along with numerous other materials.

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4. Owner of Property

Page 1

For 18 and 24 South Michigan: American National Bank & Trust Company of Chicago,  
as Trustee under Trust Agreement dated January 3, 1967 and known as Trust No. 24272

Mailing address: 33 N. LaSalle, Chicago, IL

For 30 South Michigan: LaSalle National Bank under Trust Agreement No. 4772

Mailing address: 135 S. LaSalle, Chicago, IL

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Page 1

(Repositories):

(a) Illinois Historic Structures Survey (Ill. Historic Preservation Agency), Springfield, IL

(b) Commission on Chicago Landmarks (Chicago)

10. Geographical Data

Page 4

168 front feet (160 feet deep) on the west side of Michigan Avenue beginning at a  
point 68 feet north of Monroe Street, legally described as:

Lots 5 and 8 and the North 8 feet of Lot 9, all in Block 1 in Fractional Section 15  
addition to Chicago, in Section 15, Township 39 North, Range 14, East of the Third  
Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.617

Quadrangle name Chicago Loop, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	4	47	1	5	0	4	6	36	5	70
Zone		Easting				Northing					

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martin C. Tangora

organization

date July 18, 1985

street & number 4636 North Magnolia Avenue

telephone (312) 878-7118

city or town Chicago

state Illinois

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Acting Director

date 9-25-85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

CK-H-81



20-413

1. Name of Site:

Common Gage Building

Historic

2. Location:

Street and Number 18 South Michigan Township Section  
City or Town Chicago Zip Code Range 1/4 Section  
County Cook

3. Classification:

Category (check one) Integrity (check one)  
 District  Building  Altered  Unaltered  
 Site  Structure  Moved  Original Site

4. Ownership:

Status (check one)  
 Occupied  
 Unoccupied  
 Preservation work in progress

Private  
 Public

Access to Public

Yes  Restricted  Unrestricted  No

Present Use (check one or more)

Agricultural  Industrial  Religious  
 Commercial  Military  Scientific  
 Educational  Museum  Transportation  
 Entertainment  Park  Other  
 Government  Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name Phone Number  
Street and Number  
City or Town  
State County Zip Code

ARCHITECTURE

6. Description:

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  
 Ruins  Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?  Yes ?  No

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archaeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archaeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence (1673-1780)
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People (give names & dates)

8. Specific Date: 1898

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- Aboriginal (historic)
- Aboriginal (pre-historic)
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce
- Communication
- Conservation
- Education
- Engineering
- Industry
- Invention
- Landscape Architecture
- Literature
- Military
- Music
- Political
- Religion/Philosophy
- Science
- Sculpture
- Social/Humanitarian
- Theater
- Transportation
- Urban Planning
- Other (specify)

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)

Use additional sheets if necessary. Holabird & Roche. Chicago Landmark Comm. Landmark.

9. Form prepared by: (ONE FACADE BY SULLIVAN)

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 6/24/75

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being complete. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

CHS

